

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) ~~A method~~ Method of measuring stress/strain of magnetic or magnetizable elements by ~~means of~~ detecting Barkhausen noise, comprising:

arranging an exciting/sensing device ~~(1; 2,3; 2,7) being arranged at~~ least adjacent to ~~a magnetic or magnetizable~~ said element; ~~[(4; 5),]~~

applying a continuously rising magnetizing current to the exciting device; ~~(1; 2) being acted upon by means of a magnetizing current, and the~~

detecting Barkhausen noise ~~being detected~~ by means of the sensing device; ~~(1; 3; 7),~~

~~characterized in that the exciting device (1;2) is acted upon by means of a continuously rising magnetizing current, in that~~

determining magnitude of the magnetizing current is detected when the Barkhausen noise starts; and ~~the start of the Barkhausen noise being a measurement of the stress/strain condition of the element (4;5) and being determined by means of~~

comparing the determined magnitude with measured reference values of ~~comparative measurements~~ to determine the stress/strain condition of the element.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the exciting/sensing device (1; 2, 3; 2, 7) is arranged in a manner in which it at least partially surrounds the magnetic or magnetizable element [(4; 5)].

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to Claim 1, wherein ~~or 2, characterized in that~~

a pulsed magnetizing current is used; and [[,]]

the sensing device (1; 3; 7) ~~detecting the signal of~~ detects the Barkhausen noise during [[the]] off-time of the pulses.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) The method ~~Method~~ according ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 3, Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ an intermediate element [(5')] made of a non-magnetized or non-magnetizable material is arranged between the magnetic or magnetizable element [(4)] and a structure [(6)] that is to be connected therewith.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) The method ~~Method~~ according to ~~one of~~ Claims 1 to 3, Claim 3, wherein ~~characterized in that, before the determination of its stress/strain condition,~~ the magnetic or magnetizable element [(5)] is

arranged between a non-magnetic or non-magnetizable fastening element [(4')] and a structure [(6)] that is to be connected therewith, before the determination of its stress/strain condition.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) The method Method according to ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ Claim 5, wherein the determined magnetizing current at the start of the Barkhausen noise is proportional to the internal stress of the element [(4; 5)].

Claim 7. (Cancelled)

Claim 8. (New) A method of measuring stress/strain in a magnetic or magnetizable item, comprising:

applying a continuously increasing magnetic field to said item;

detecting a time of commencement of Barkhausen noise generated in said item in response to said magnetic field;

determining strength of said magnetic field at said time of commencement of Barkhausen noise;

determining stress/strain in said item as a function of the determined strength of the magnetic field.

Claim 9. (New) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said applying step comprises passing a continuously increasing magnetizing current through an exciting device situated in proximity to said item.

Claim 10. (New) The method according to Claim 9, wherein said step of determining strength of the magnetic field comprises measuring said magnetizing current at said time of commencement of Barkhausen noise.

Claim 11. (New) The method according to Claim 10, wherein said step of determining stress/strain in said item comprises comparing measured magnetizing current with measured reference values for said item.